

**How to Make
It Work
for YOU**

SONday'SCOOL™



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SONday'SCOOL
A World of Difference

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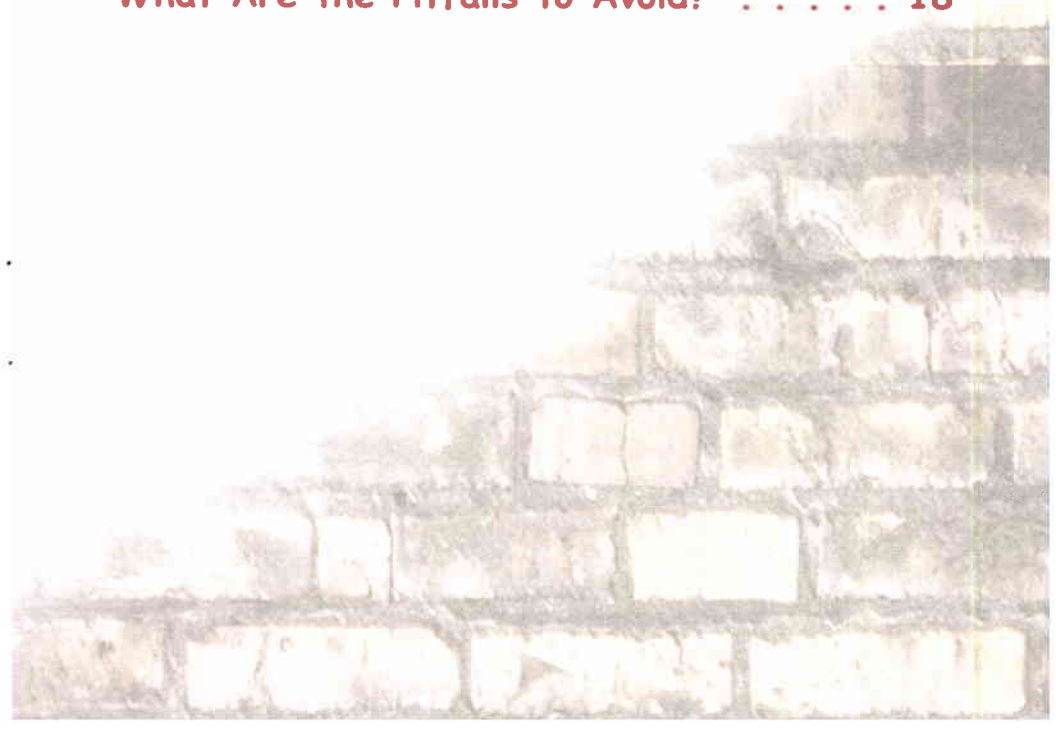
A World of Difference

SONday'SCOOL is Sunday School, but it's not. For one thing, it may not be on Sunday. And it should be as little like school as possible—at least, school in the traditional sense of “Sit down, be quiet, and listen.” SONday'SCOOL is active . . . it's alive . . . it's COOL! A How-To Manual is available for each of the following new SONday'SCOOL models. Contact: 1 (800) YOU-CARE (968-2273) or www.hopeshare.org



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The mission of **HopeShare** is to intervene in the lives of children at risk, to offer them a safe place where they can learn to feel good about themselves and be good to others, to break the cycle of despair and share the hope of a personal relationship with **Jesus Christ**.

All proceeds and contributions resulting from the sale of this book will go to The Salvation Army's **"HopeChest"** for abused, neglected, and disadvantaged children.

For more information:

Telephone: **1 (800) YOU-CARE (968-2273)**

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What's It All About?

Imagine an inner-city neighborhood of more than 30,000 people—a place where your denomination or fellowship has no church presence or active ministry. It's a neighborhood marked by all of those things that put children at risk:

- ♥ run-down, dangerous housing, whether private or public
- ♥ high incidence of single-parent and no-parent families, and of teen pregnancy
- ♥ kids spending a great deal of time on their own, at home and on the streets, neglected and—all too often—abused
- ♥ grinding poverty and an utter lack of economic opportunity—except for the ever-present chance to deal in drugs or in human bodies

What's the consequence? Profoundly low self-esteem. A sense of hopelessness. Perpetuation of a cycle of despair, with generation after generation born into the same conditions.

What's the remedy? A place to be protected and safe. An experience of the unlimited love of God and of His people. A new self-perception, based on the reality that Jesus died for me. A new attitude toward others, based on God's love for them. New hope for the future.



How does this happen? Not by sitting and waiting for children and families to come to church. Not even by mounting a vigorous campaign to bring them in. In most big cities, folks are very reluctant to cross neighborhood boundaries to go to church. For many, obstacles of fear and suspicion make it unlikely that they'll go to church anywhere.

The answer is to bring church to kids where they are. The answer is **DISCOVERY DAY**. That means finding a place in the neighborhood, a place that is well equipped and kid-friendly—or a place that can be made that way. It means provision for the preparation and serving of nutritious, appealing meals. It means offering a **SONday'S TOOL** program that kids will enjoy and that teaches them about Jesus. It means outreach and services to families. It means connecting with schools and other agencies in the community. Ultimately, it means planting a church.

How Do We Plan Something Like This?

The initial pilot program started in Philadelphia in September, with Lt. Colonel Marcella Carlson briefing the start-up team on their assignment: "**DISCOVERY DAY** is planting a new church by beginning a **SONday'SCOOL** for at-risk children in an urban setting. Planning is important."

The planning committee included denominational leaders, pastors, church members, and interested outsiders. All had talents and skills that would be valuable in the formation and implementation of **DISCOVERY DAY**. All had a heart for children, a concern for their physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

When that group met for the first time, everyone was excited about the task assigned to them. It seemed ambitious, but all agreed that the results of the **DISCOVERY DAY** program would be worth the effort. Here's what the timeline looked like:

Phase 1—October	Complete Initial Planning
Phase 2—November	Select Site
Phase 3—December	Map Out Program
Phase 4—January	Prepare for Kick-Off
Phase 5—Ongoing	Implement Program

Where Should We Do It?

A central point to consider in choosing a site is the unofficial, unstated boundaries of a neighborhood. Often a street or area that an outsider might see as part of a neighborhood is not viewed the same way by the residents. So it's wise to get input from those residents when choosing a site. Also, in the midst of urban blight there may not be house numbers or street signs. Be alert to landmarks, the way in which local residents keep track of their neighborhood. This is all part of understanding your target area.

For the Philadelphia pilot program, several different settings were considered. Here's how the decision was finally made. The process was bathed in prayer and guided by the Holy Spirit, the Lord of the harvest.

Mary Ann Hardy lived in the East Falls housing project and was a member of the Salvation Army church in the Roxborough section of the city. The East Falls project was demolished, and the Hardy family was relocated to Raymond Rosen Manor, in North Philadelphia. But Mary Ann continued attending the church in Roxborough. Then she discovered that many of the girls in her new neighborhood were not involved with any church. She started a scouting program for them. Transporting the girls to and from Roxborough was simply too difficult, so Mary Ann ran the program in her home.

That meant that a beachhead had been established in North Philadelphia, a neighborhood of more than 30,000 people with no other Salvation Army presence. As Colonel Carlson said, "With 17 Salvation Army churches within the city limits of Philadelphia and others in nearby communities, you would think there might be conflict with existing ministries. The reality in a city this size is that even a change of several blocks can bring you to a new neighborhood with its own identity and turf."

Before making a commitment, regional denominational leadership took a close look at the neighborhood in question. They contacted Percept, Inc., a Christian demographics company that offers its services in the interest of church planting and expansion. In abbreviated form, here are the results of the Percept study:

- ♥ The population of the ZIP Code that represents the neighborhood is 37,223. Many of the communities where The Salvation Army has planted churches don't have nearly that many people.
- ♥ The largest generational group in the neighborhood is "Millennials" (age 0-14). Millennials make up 29% of the total population, compared with 21% of the US population as a whole.

- ♥ In terms of family structures, the area can be described as extremely nontraditional. There is below-average representation of married persons and two-parent families.

POPULATION BY MARITAL STATUS (age 15 and older)			
	Single (never married)	Divorced or Widowed	Married
Study Area	50%	31%	19%
U.S. Average	27%	18%	55%

- ♥ Conditions that contribute to placing a community at risk are at a critically high level. Such conditions have particular impact on children. The area is well above national averages in households below the poverty line, adults without a high school diploma, and households headed by a single mother. It also reflects unusually high concern about community problems; family problems; and basic necessities such as food, housing, and jobs.

COMMUNITY RISK ISSUES			
	Poverty Households	Single-Parent Households	High School Dropouts
Study Area	50%	72%	56%
U.S. Average	16%	21%	25%

- ♥ The likely level of faith involvement and preference for historical Christian religious affiliation is very high when compared to national averages.

FAITH INVOLVEMENT			
	Not Involved	Somewhat Involved	Strongly Involved
Study Area	20%	30%	50%
U.S. Average	35%	30%	35%

Overall, the results of the Percept study indicated that the planning committee was right on target in choosing North Philadelphia as a site for the new program. All agreed that it was the leading of the Lord.

With this information in hand, the committee forged ahead. A local community center was identified as a possible location for start-up programming.

What Staff Will We Need?

Lt. Colonel Bill Carlson, Salvation Army Divisional Commander for Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware, describes what happened next: "With all that was transpiring, and with full knowledge that we were planning for much more than a launch day, we acknowledged the need for full-time leadership. The Lord sent us Carol Ann Kendrick, an experienced and skillful African-American Christian leader. She came to us with a heart for our mission and exceptional ability to get things done. She has pastoral training and Evangelical Teacher Training Certification. The timing was the working of the Lord."

Rev. Carol Kendrick came on board as an outreach pastor. She and Mary Ann Hardy, the church member who hoped for more for her community and started a scouting program, formed the nucleus of a viable neighborhood team.

At first, the weekly crew also included several Salvation Army denominational leaders and pastors, who served on a rotating basis. Their varied backgrounds provided the children with interesting presentations. However, over time, more and more of the work is being done by volunteers from the neighborhood—including the parents of several of the children, as well as representatives of community organizations.

Things don't always go smoothly and easily. Pastor Kendrick describes one incident this way: "A teenager volunteered to work with us. When one group of youngsters came in, she did not want to give them snacks. When I questioned her reaction, her answer was 'I don't like them'; and she mentioned something about where they lived. I asked her, 'What would Jesus do?' She agreed to give them snacks. When the group left, an unattended Easter basket left with them. They were seen taking the basket by an adult. The teenage volunteer looked at me, and I looked to God for answers, and to see His moving. Time, patience, and the power of God's love can and do bring change."



What Training Is Required?

If a program is going to target at-risk children, some special training is required.

On a Saturday in March, 109 concerned youth workers and pastors attended an early morning session in Behavior Management at the Roxborough Corps in Philadelphia. The speaker for the seminar was a psychologist who has worked with many youngsters with learning and behavior difficulties—along with their families—over the course of 18 years. He is also a committed Christian and Sunday School teacher.

Our trainer presented teaching strategies that would be helpful when working with children who have learning difficulties. His topics included classroom setting, planning, flexibility, and discipline.

Lt. Colonel Marcella Carlson felt that the good attendance indicated there was "a hunger out there—teachers who are interested in enhancing their skills and are dedicated to their children."

Will the Children Come?

Before the launch date, workers blanketed the neighborhood with flyers. Something big was coming to North Philadelphia! The word began to spread.

That Saturday morning, the street outside the community center had been blocked off. A Salvation Army canteen was on hand to minister to the body. (It would serve 400 hot dogs, plus chips and drinks, before the day's end.) Troops from denominational headquarters and surrounding Salvation Army churches stood ready to minister to the spirit, providing words of encouragement and program leadership. They gathered to pray for the day ahead.

And 150 kids came pouring in! Adults swelled the attendance to 250—including program staff. Most of the kick-off party would have taken place outdoors—but it was February 10! So, inside, every child was registered. Each received a Polaroid picture to glue in the front cover of an "I Am Somebody" booklet to take home. Every person who attended that day received a Bible.

There were balloons, clowns, rides, games, crafts, a popcorn machine, music, drama, prizes, and giveaways. And, of course, there was an invitation to return next Saturday.



What Does the Program Look Like?

As the **DISCOVERY DAY** planners thought about the kids they would be ministering to, they felt that—first and foremost—children need to be accepted. They need to have a sense of belonging. The planners were determined to make every effort to ensure that all children who attended the program would have that need fulfilled. At the same time, it was important to create a program that kids would want to come to—where they would be excited, and not bored.

So the **DISCOVERY DAY** experience, which takes up a Saturday morning, consists of free play, drama, supervised play, a Bible story, crafts—and refreshments. The structured, supervised activity with adult participation helps to develop authority/child relationships. Chess and karate classes are also offered.

As the program develops, new programming ideas have come to the fore. Plans call for after-school homework and tutoring, and for training in the use of computers and musical instruments. And a series of sessions devoted to theater arts and related careers is in the planning stages.

How Do We Deal With the Community?

Effective communication is critical to success in dealing with an individual or a community. People need to be kept informed and to be included in what is being done. Time, patience, and the power of God's love can release people to trust and take risks.

A significant step in building community relations was the official "adoption" of the local elementary school by The Salvation Army and **DISCOVERY DAY**. School board officials and top denominational leaders were in attendance along with students and faculty as the adoption papers were signed. The ceremony included a presentation by the school's cheerleaders, a play from the reading group, and words of encouragement to the students.

One implication of the adoption was that The Salvation Army would serve as a resource and support for students at the school. For example, with the start of a new school year, the Army provided backpacks and school supplies to needy students.

Another implication was the development of a close relationship with school administration, especially the principal and the Family Resource and Community Coordinator. This made it possible for Pastor Carol Kendrick to have access to an office at the school two mornings a week.

Again, Lt. Colonel Bill Carlson put it well: "We know that what we have done is merely preliminary to the real work of weekly and daily relationship building in this community. It will be surrounded with prayer as we make our presence known, plan well, and continue on with the initiative to plant a new church—a **DISCOVERY DAY** Church in Philadelphia."

What Facilities Are Called For?

DISCOVERY DAY began at the community center for Raymond Rosen Manor, a brick structure with the rental office on one side and a multipurpose room on the other. The building didn't look like much, but inside it was made kid-friendly by sectioning the room in Montessori school fashion. Smaller sections were devoted to storytelling, crafts, games, and chess—with one big section for active play.

Probably the best and most useful tool has been a ball. The children love playing with the balls. They play dodgeball, basketball—at the community center, using large trash can for hoops—and kickball. The smaller children enjoy just bouncing a ball.

The other most-used tool was a rope. The kids, especially the girls, like to jump rope.

Of course, you can't play chess or other board games without the games. And crafts materials are used up quickly. Additional materials include Bibles, CDs or cassette tapes (for musical background), and videotapes. Then there's food—lots of it.

Needed equipment includes the machines to play those tapes, possibly a PA system, a computer, FAX machine, and copier. A variety of furniture will be called for, plus a refrigerator and stove.

After **DISCOVERY DAY** had been up and running for several months, the community center was closed for renovation. The only available space was the gym in the local elementary school. Fortunately, program staff had built a strong relationship with the principal and other school staff—starting with the "adoption" of the school by The Salvation Army. Use of the school kitchen was also offered.

The gym was great for active play. But, for all other aspects of the program, it was a disaster. There was no place to store materials and supplies, so Pastor Kendrick ended up pretty much running the program out of her van. And it's tough to gather kids for a quiet time of Bible storytelling in the middle of a cavernous, echoing gym. Imagine what it's like to try to play board games!

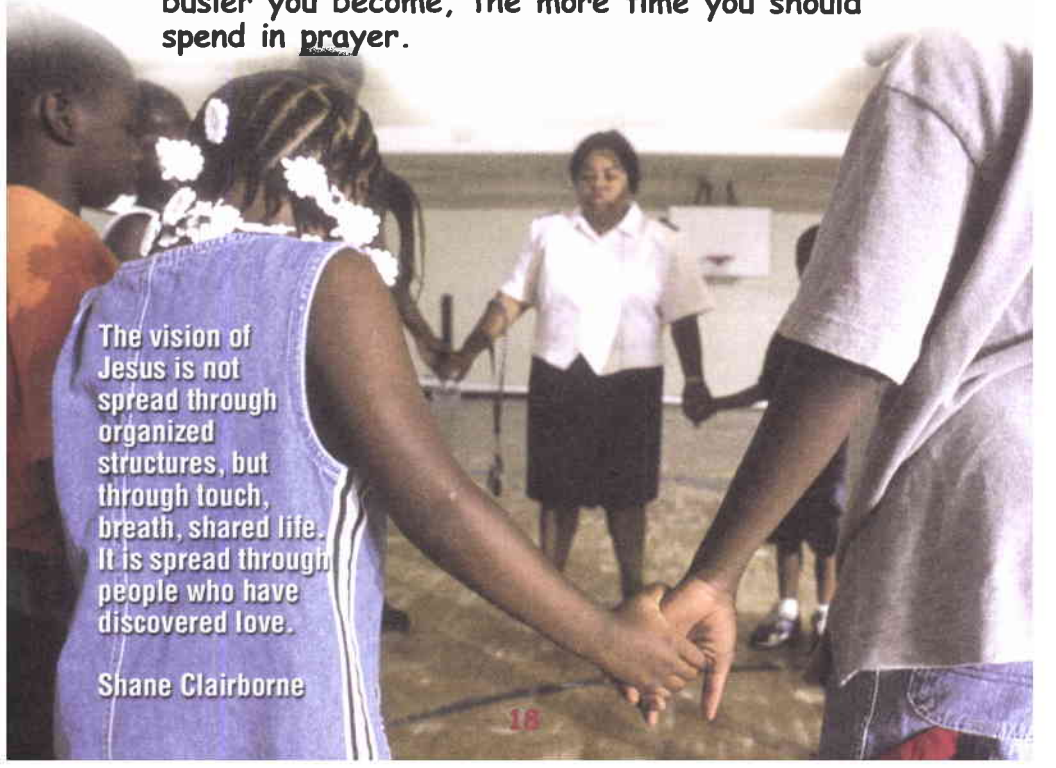
Facilities are important.



What Are the Pitfalls to Avoid?

Where will never be another **DISCOVERY DAY** like **DISCOVERY DAY** in North Philadelphia. Time, location, personnel, culture—a wide variety of circumstances will make each **DISCOVERY DAY** unique. But there are some things that will apply in every such situation.

- ♥ Never take your eyes off the prize. Keep focused on mission.
- ♥ Don't become so busy that you don't have time for individual children or adults—or for community groups.
- ♥ Don't take sides in neighborhood disputes.
- ♥ Don't get too busy to pray and fast. In fact, the busier you become, the more time you should spend in prayer.



The vision of Jesus is not spread through organized structures, but through touch, breath, shared life. It is spread through people who have discovered love.

Shane Clairborne



Make Hope Happen!

